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NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

Report of the fourth meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

Note by the secretariat

1. Pursuant to its mandate from the Conference of the Parties (decision 8/CP.5), the secretariat coordinated and facilitated the organization of the fourth meeting of the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and the preparation of its report. The objectives of the meeting were to consider the report of the CGE to the subsidiary bodies (FCCC/SBI/2001/15), and to review the progress of the CGE's work in accordance with its mandate and terms of reference, as contained in the annex to decision 8/CP.5 (FCCC/CP/1999/6/Add.1).

2. The subsidiary bodies may wish to take note of this report and to provide further guidance to the CGE on the conduct of its work.

FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

Report by the Chairman
Mr. Philip S. Weech (Bahamas)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The fourth meeting of the CGE was held in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 25 to 26 October 2001. Experts from the Bahamas, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Switzerland, Thailand and Togo, as well as an expert from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Greenhouse Gas Inventory Task Force attended the meeting. Six experts, from Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Brazil, Germany, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, and an expert from the National Communications Support Programme of the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, were unable to attend the meeting.

Scope of the report

2. This document summarizes the deliberations of the CGE at its fourth meeting. Issues discussed were the CGE report to the subsidiary bodies (FCCC/SBI/2001/15) and the terms of reference and future work of the CGE relating to the improvement of the preparation of national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties).

II. DISCUSSIONS

3. The Chairman of the third meeting of the CGE, Dr. Vute Wangwacharakul (Thailand), noted with satisfaction the significant progress made by the CGE in accomplishing its mandate within a relatively short span of time, and thanked members and the UNFCCC secretariat for the excellent work done in supporting him during his tenure as Chairman. The CGE then elected Mr. Philip Weech (Bahamas) and Dr. Isabelle Niang-Diop (Senegal), as Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively, for its fourth meeting.

4. Mr. Philip Weech welcomed the CGE members to the fourth meeting and acknowledged the efforts of members in the successful completion of the CGE report, which would be presented to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its fifteenth session.

A. CGE report to the subsidiary bodies

5. The CGE considered that while the preparation of its report to the subsidiary bodies (FCCC/SBI/2001/15) was guided by the spirit and the letter of its mandate, as annexed to decision 8/CP.5, the implementation of the recommendations contained therein constituted an important step towards "improving the process of preparation of national communications of non-Annex I Parties".

6. The CGE members stressed that the report represented the technical character of the work that the CGE members had undertaken, which included the examination of 50 initial national communications, the compilation and synthesis of national communications, information compiled on the status of preparation of initial national communications, and the information contained in the reports of the four CGE workshops which had been attended by 94 government-nominated experts, from 70

non-Annex I Parties, who had been actively involved in the preparation of the initial national communications.

7. Members discussed at length the nature of the constraints and problems non-Annex I Parties had encountered in the preparation of their initial national communications, including those relating to national GHG inventories, vulnerability and adaptation assessment, research and systematic observation, GHG abatement analysis, education, training and public awareness, information and networking, and financial and technical support.

8. The CGE members identified, among others, four critical but closely related areas of need, which would have to be addressed in order to improve the process of the preparation of national communications: (i) the need to improve the methodologies used to prepare the various elements of information in the national communications, (ii) the need to improve the UNFCCC reporting guidelines, (iii) the need to create and strengthen regional and national networks which provide data, information, tools and expertise necessary to prepare high-quality national communications, and (iv) the need to provide financial and technical support to facilitate the reporting of information and to ensure that the technical teams which have been established to prepare national communications were maintained.

National GHG inventories

9. The CGE members emphasized that recommendations relating to national GHG inventories were meant to address: (i) the lack of activity data and appropriate emission factors, (ii) the methodological difficulties relating to the use of the Revised 1996 IPCC Guidelines, and (iii) the need to improve the transparency and completeness of reporting of information on GHG inventories.

Vulnerability and adaptation assessment

10. The CGE's recommendations on the reporting of vulnerability and adaptation assessment information were designed to address methodological issues relating to the application of the IPCC Technical Guidelines for Assessing Climate Impacts and Adaptations. The CGE noted that many of the problems were related to the non-suitability of methods and tools, and the lack of national capacity, data, institutional frameworks and financial resources.

Research and systematic observation

11. The CGE members stressed the need for improvement to the support for and reporting of research and systematic observation, and took into account the need for urgent and effective implementation of decisions 14/CP.4 and 5/CP.5, which addressed some of the problems relating to lack of data and the capacity to access, analyse and manage data.

GHG abatement analysis

12. The CGE members emphasized that recommendations relating to the improvement of support for and reporting of GHG abatement analysis would address methodological, data and reporting issues and problems encountered by Parties in the preparation of their national communications.

Financial and technical support

13. The CGE members emphasized the importance of timely and adequate provision of financial and technical support to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of national communications, and stressed

that their recommendations, if implemented, would alleviate the problems encountered in climate change education, training and public awareness, as well as in the area of information and networking.

14. The CGE considered that the financial and technical support provided by bilateral and multilateral organizations in the preparation of national communications was critical. It proposed to elaborate further its work relating to the review of existing activities and programmes which facilitate and support the preparation of national communications so that they are coordinated in a manner which minimizes duplication of effort.

15. The CGE was of the view that, given the limited time and the level of resources available to conduct its work, it had substantially and successfully completed the work relating to its mandate and terms of reference.

16. The CGE reaffirmed that the decision on when and how its recommendations would be implemented was entirely in the purview of the subsidiary bodies and the Conference of the Parties (COP).

IPCC Guidelines

17. The CGE agreed that methodological difficulties associated with some aspects of the IPCC Guidelines needed to be addressed, and recommended to the subsidiary bodies that the COP should communicate to the IPCC secretariat the need for the IPCC to revise the relevant sections of the methodologies on national GHG inventories and on the assessment of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

UNFCCC guidelines

18. The CGE discussed the consolidated report of Parties' views on its preliminary report to the subsidiary bodies and the current progress of the process aimed at improvement of the guidelines for subsequent national communications from non-Annex I Parties, contained in document FCCC/SBI/2001/11.

19. The CGE unanimously endorsed the validity of its recommendations, contained in its report to the subsidiary bodies, relating to the UNFCCC guidelines for the preparation of national communications from non-Annex I Parties. It noted that the decision on when to revise the guidelines was a matter for the SBI to consider.

B. Terms of reference and future work of the CGE

20. The CGE members considered elements of work that could be included in a revised terms of reference for the CGE and agreed to recommend that, in addition to their current mandate and terms of reference, the following activities could be undertaken before the eighth session of the COP: (i) analysis of information contained in all national communications submitted by Parties after 15 April 2001 which are not covered in the report (FCCC/SBI/2001/15), and (ii) identification and assessment of technical problems and constraints that have influenced the preparation of initial national communications by those non-Annex I Parties which have yet to complete their national communications.

21. The CGE members concluded that the CGE could provide input to any COP decision regarding the revision of its terms of reference, if the COP so wished. The CGE recommended that the cost of implementing its mandate should be included in the core budget of the secretariat.

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